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THE FOREST SERVICE

How it fits
in the
Federal Structure



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE

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REPLY TO: 1600 Information Services

SUBJECT: The Forest Service: How it fits in the Federal Structure

TO: Regional Foresters, Directors and Area Directors



Many employees in the Forest Service have asked how we found our place in the Executive Branch of the Government. This is a brief history of the establishment of the Forest Service in the U. S. Department of Agriculture and of various plans set forth in the past and present to broaden or alter its position in the Federal structure.

We hope this brief summary will add to your understanding and answer some of the questions that might arise on this subject.


E. W. SCHULTZ
Deputy Chief

cc: Supervisors
Rangers
Project Leaders

THE FOREST SERVICE

How it fits in the Federal Structure

HISTORY

It began in 1873, in Portland, Maine, when the American Association for Advancement of Science appointed a committee to memorialize Congress "...upon the importance of promoting the cultivation of timber and the preservation of forests and to recommend legislation for securing these objects."

Congress responded by appropriating \$2,000 for a study of forest conditions in the United States and asking Frederick Watts, Commissioner of Agriculture, to conduct it. The Commissioner, in 1876, appointed Dr. Franklin B. Hough "Special Agent" in Agriculture. Dr. Hough was then chosen to head this study. Between 1877 and 1883, Dr. Hough made three comprehensive reports on the forest situation to Congress.

In 1881 the forestry agency in the USDA, a fact-finding agency with no forests or lands under its control, was made a "Division of Forestry." Seven years later, Gifford Pinchot became head of the Division with its 12 people--six scientific and six clerical. By July 1, 1905, Pinchot's organization had grown to 734, of which 268 were in the Washington Office and 466 in the field. Many were graduates of newly established forestry schools.

The National Forest System as we know it today, had its beginning in an 1891 Act of Congress, under which three Presidents, Harrison, Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt, set aside huge acreages of the public domain as "forest reserves." Until 1897, when Congress passed an Act outlining a system of organization and management for these public forests, the "reserves," then under the Department of the Interior, were simply closed areas.

In 1901, the Division of Forestry was reorganized into the "Bureau of Forestry" in the USDA with authority to engage in a variety of activities including the preparation of forest management plans for private timberland owners, tree planting, and forest investigations.

President Theodore Roosevelt in his December 1904 Message to Congress, echoed the sentiments of many concerned Americans when he said, "All the forest work of the Government should be concentrated in the Department of Agriculture where...all problems relating to growth from the soil are always gathered, and where all the sciences auxiliary to forestry are at hand for prompt and effective cooperation."

The American Forestry Congress, meeting in Washington, D. C. in 1905, strongly endorsed the President's position by passing a resolution calling upon Congress to unify all forest work of the Government, including the Forest Reserves, in the U. S. Department of Agriculture. At this meeting, President Roosevelt declared that the objective of forestry is not to "lock up" forests, but to consider, "how best to combine use with preservation."

Congress responded in 1905 by passing the February 1 Act, transferring the Forest Reserves from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture. In this same year, under leadership of Pinchot, USDA's Bureau of Forestry was reorganized and named the "Forest Service."

In 1906 the Forest Reserves totaled about 107 million acres. On March 1 and 2, 1907, President Roosevelt added, by Presidential Proclamation, 15,654,631 additional acres of "Forest Reserves" to the National Forest System. On March 4, 1907, he signed an appropriation bill on which Congress had attached a rider prohibiting further additions to the Forest Reserves by Presidential Proclamation in certain western States. Since then the restriction has been applied to a few other western States. Creation of National Forests by acquisition has been mostly in the East under the Weeks Act of March 1, 1911. Also in 1907, the Forest Reserves became known as the "National Forests."

The 1911 Weeks Act established a new national conservation policy which permits to this day, purchase by the Federal Government of forest lands necessary to the protection of the flow of navigable streams. Today, there are about 187 million acres in the National Forest System which includes about four million acres of National Grasslands. The Forest Service also conducts the world's largest forestry research program and a nationwide cooperative State and private forestry program.

Through the years, the Department of Agriculture and the Forest Service have tried to live up to the confidence in the Department that President Roosevelt exhibited when in 1904 he recommended the concentration of all Federal forestry activities in USDA.

Background on Reorganization:

From time to time there have been attempts to place the Forest Service in the Department of the Interior or in a new Department of Natural Resources. There were several basic reasons for the original transfer of the Forest Reserves to the Department of Agriculture and the establishment of the Forest Service in that Department. First, as

President Theodore Roosevelt stated, all the "problems relating to growth from the soil," which includes the growth of trees, were gathered in Agriculture.

Other reasons were: (1) Almost all the trained foresters in the country were working for Agriculture's Bureau of Forestry under the dynamic leadership of Gifford Pinchot; effective management of the Forest Reserves required trained foresters; (2) it brought together in one organization the publicly owned land of the Forest Reserves, the cooperative activities of the Bureau of Forestry on privately owned lands, and the beginnings of forestry research--creating the opportunity for a coordinated broad scale attack on the Nation's entire forest conservation problem; (3) it was feared by some that the political orientation of the Department of the Interior in that era would not be conducive to the proper management and protection of the Forest Reserves.

In the late 1930's, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes made a strong attempt to build up a great Department of the Interior and bolster its public image. He sought to transfer the Forest Service away from Agriculture and make it the keystone of a proposed Department of Conservation.

The public became aroused against the transfer, however, and conservationists joined with lumbermen and ranchers--almost 200 public organizations in all--in a campaign to keep the Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture. They were successful.

Hoover Commission:

In 1947 a Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government was established. It was commonly known as the Hoover Commission, after its chairman, former President Herbert Hoover. It had 24 advisory committees or "task forces," and of these, three pertained to natural resources--the committees on agricultural activities, natural resources, and public works.

All three of these task forces agreed that administration of the National Forests, O. & C. lands, and grazing districts should be in the same department, and preferably the same bureau. The task force on agricultural activities wanted to place the responsibility in the Department of Agriculture; the one on natural resources wanted to place it in a new Department of Natural Resources which would replace Interior; the public works committee first recommended the Department of Agriculture, then later a new Department of Works and Conservation.

The full Hoover Commission adopted the report of the Agriculture Task Force, recommending transfer of the land activities of the Bureau of Land Management to the Department of Agriculture. There was, however, a strong minority report in favor of a Department of Natural Resources.

Neither President Truman nor Congress took action on the recommendations.

In 1953 a second "Hoover Commission" was set up to make recommendations on organization and policy. It reported in 1955 that "the study of Federal rural lands for the first Hoover Commission's Task Force on Natural Resources was exhaustive and definitive. . . conditions affecting the administration of these lands have not changed materially in the intervening years." It recommended that (1) the President appoint a committee to study Federal rural lands and laws affecting them, and (2) after thorough study, a uniform policy for all agencies involved in control of Federal rural lands be developed.

In the 1960's a combination of population pressure and the side effects of a highly industrialized society once again focused attention on the quality of environment and the need for sound conservation policies. Once again the idea of a Department of Natural Resources, to include the Forest Service, was brought to public attention.

Public Land Law Review Commission:

In September 1964 Congress established a Public Land Law Review Commission to study existing laws and procedures relating to the administration of the public lands of the United States and to make recommendations for their modification. Originally, the Commission was to make its report to the President and Congress by December 31, 1968. However, this date has been extended to June 30, 1970. The Commission agenda does not specifically include the matter of reorganization but its recommendations may well have a strong bearing on the subject.

Moss Bills:

In the 89th Congress, 1965, Senator Moss of Utah introduced the first of his bills to "redesignate the Department of the Interior as the Department of Natural Resources and to transfer certain agencies to and from such a Department." A similar bill was introduced in the 90th Congress. At hearings held on this bill, in 1967, former Secretary of Agriculture Freeman recommended that the bill not be enacted. He gave as reasons (1) historic experience, (2) the Forest Service and the Soil Conservation Service were essentially interwoven into the Department of Agriculture's program to revitalize Rural America, (3) competition between Agriculture and Interior was healthy and beneficial to the public.

CURRENT SITUATION

On April 5, 1969, it was announced that President Nixon had appointed a five-man council for a new and "thorough" review of organization of the Executive Branch of the Government. Roy L. Ash, President of Litton Industries, will head the council. Other members are Dean George Baker of the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration; John B. Connally, Former Governor of Texas; Frederick R. Kappel, Chairman of the Executive Committee of AT&T; and Richard M. Paget, a partner in a New York management consultant firm.

The Council appears to be a fulfillment of President Nixon's campaign pledge for a searching, fundamental appraisal of the whole structure of Government. White House sources have reported there will be sweeping organization changes in the Executive Departments; the Nixon Administration is committed to streamlining the Federal Government. It has announced that both the Departments of Agriculture and Interior are among those to be studied.

Earlier, on March 18, Congress sent to the White House a bill giving President Nixon authority for two years to initiate organizational changes in the Federal Government. This is the same power held by Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson. The President may submit to Congress a plan to create a new Department or transfer or abolish an agency. The plan will go into effect within 60 days unless disapproved by either the House or the Senate.

Proposed Legislation:

On March 7, 1969 Senator Moss, on behalf of Senators Case, Dodd, Hart, Metcalf, and Yarborough introduced S. 1446--A Bill to Establish a Department of Natural Resources. This bill is similar to the one Senator Moss first introduced in the 89th Congress, and again in the 90th. In effect, the bill would abolish the Department of the Interior and transfer its functions as well as those of the Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture, the Corps of Engineers of the Department of the Army relating to civil works, the National Oceanographic Data Center of the Department of the Navy, and the National Science Foundation sea grant programs, to a new Department to be called the Department of Natural Resources.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Office of Territories in the Department of the Interior would be transferred to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The bill provides for a Secretary of Natural Resources, a Deputy Secretary, and two Under Secretaries, one for water and one for lands.

On June 5 a bill was introduced in the Senate on behalf of Senator Case for himself and Senators Gravel and Moss to establish a Department of Conservation and the Environment (S.2312). The Department of the Interior's primary conservation and environmental functions such as parks, recreation and water pollution would be absorbed by the new Department. Such conservation and environmental activities as air pollution, forest and soil management, noise abatement and highway beautification would be transferred from other Departments. Specifically, the bill would transfer the Forest Service and the Soil Conservation Service from the Department of Agriculture to the new Department.

The Case bill would also create a nine-member, presidentially-appointed Council of Environmental Advisors for the Secretary. The Council would give independent advice on environmental matters and receive and investigate complaints from the public about Federal activities that may threaten the environment. In addition, the bill provides for an Environmental Security Council which would formulate and carry out the Department's response to environmental emergencies.

There have been at least 10 different bills to set up a Council on Environmental Quality, or equivalent. For example, Senator Jackson on February 18 introduced a bill (S.1075) to establish an Environmental Quality Council and authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct ecological research. On May 29 he proposed an amendment to the bill which would make an extensive Congressional declaration of national environmental policy. In part, it would recognize that "each person has a fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment and that each person has a responsibility to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the environment."

Many of the above bills would also deal with the Congressional approach to natural resource activities. Some would establish joint or select committees regarding the environment. In particular, Senator Muskie's resolution (S.Res. 78) to create a Select Committee on Technology and the Human Environment has been approved by a Senate Subcommittee.

Environmental Quality Council

Besides the proposed environmental legislation, on May 29 President Nixon established by Executive Order a Cabinet-level Environmental Quality Council. The Council is chaired by the President himself and includes the Vice President and the Secretaries of Agriculture; Commerce; Health, Education and Welfare; Housing and Urban Development; Interior; and Transportation. This Council will serve as a focal point of Administration efforts to protect natural resources. Also, a 15-member Citizen's Advisory Committee on Environmental Quality was created to work with the council.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Why the current interest in governmental reorganization and a Department of Natural Resources?

A. President Nixon on April 5, 1969, announced he had appointed a five-man panel to thoroughly review the organization of the Executive Branch of the Government including the Departments of Agriculture and Interior. The Congress has given the President authority for two years to initiate organization changes in the Federal Government subject to Congressional veto. White House sources have predicted sweeping organizational changes in an attempt to streamline the Federal Government. The President has also established a Cabinet-level Environmental Quality Council.

In addition, On March 7 Senator Moss introduced a Bill to Establish a Department of Natural Resources. On June 5 a Bill to Create a Department of Conservation and the Environment was introduced on behalf of Senators Case, Gravel, and Moss. Several committees of Congress are considering bills to create an independent Council on Environmental Quality, or its equivalent.

Q. What are the basic provisions of the Moss bill?

A. Most of the present functions of the Department of the Interior would be transferred to the new Department of Natural Resources. The functions of the Forest Service and the Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture, the functions of the Corps of Engineers of the Department of the Army relating to civil works, those of the National Oceanographic Data Center of the Department of the Navy, and the National Science Foundation sea grant programs would also go to the new Department. The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Office of Territories in the Department of the Interior would be transferred to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Q. Exactly how would the Forest Service be involved in the transfer?

A. As provided in the Moss Bill, all functions carried out immediately before the effective date of the bill by the Forest Service or by the Secretary of Agriculture relating to Forest Service functions, and all personnel, assets and liabilities of the Forest Service would be transferred to the Secretary of Natural Resources. The bill provides for a Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and two Under Secretaries, one for Water and one for Lands.

Q. Does the Moss Bill represent new thinking?

A. No. Senator Moss has introduced similar bills in both the 89th and 90th Congresses. In the late 1940's, one task force of the Hoover Commission recommended the establishment of a Department of Natural Resources, although the Commission as a whole did not so recommend. Even earlier, in the 1930's, Secretary of the Interior Ickes worked to have established a Department of Conservation which would have included the Forest Service as well as the agencies of Interior.

Q. Is the power of reorganization granted the President by Congress something new?

A. No. Each of his three predecessors was granted the same authority-- to submit to Congress plans to create a new Department or transfer or abolish an agency. A plan will go into effect within 60 days unless disapproved by Congress.

Q. What is the argument for a Department of Natural Resources?

A. Senator Moss, in introducing the bill, stated that: "We must not only establish overall policies for the development and management of our natural resources, but we must organize the Federal structure which deals with natural resources to see that today's great tasks in this field are performed efficiently and effectively. . . . This legislation is necessary because the structure of our resource agencies is fragmented; and because this fragmentation is preventing the quality of conservation and management that the public interest requires." Proponents argue that to be truly effective a Department of Natural Resources must include all Federal resource programs and all programs affecting resource use and development on private lands.

Q. What is the argument against a Department of Natural Resources?

A. Opponents of a Department of Natural Resources which would consolidate all land and water managing agencies of the Federal government under one roof cite, in general, :

- (1) Any such agency or department would be so enormous that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to manage;
- (2) Such an agency would have a monopoly of economic and political power over the Nation's resources;
- (3) The real problem is not lack of unified policy, but competing uses for the same resources. Putting all resource agencies in one Department will not automatically wipe out competing demands.

Q. Why include the Forest Service in the new Department?

A. Senator Moss states that "to be effective, a Department of Natural Resources must include the Forest Service. . . that the Bureau of Land Management administers part of the public lands, while the Forest Service administers most of the remainder. . . that originally the Forest Service was supposed to administer land while the Bureau of Land Management was supposed to liquidate the Government's holdings. . . now both manage land for multiple use and their functions constantly overlap each other as well as those of other Federal agencies."

Q. Is the Forest Service a land management agency only?

A. No. The Forest Service is a people agency as well as a land management agency. It does manage land, of course; 187 million acres of National Forests and Grasslands. But the Forest Service does not treat land management as an end in itself. The Forest Service is a part of the Department of Agriculture whose primary purpose is to improve the social and economic status of Rural America. Forest Service programs are coordinated with other USDA programs and are a part of the rural complex; they contribute greatly to the upbuilding of the economy and the social and cultural status of rural Americans. The Forest Service provides jobs, raw material for industry, local demonstration areas, scientific skills and knowledge, and protection of forest resources through cooperative arrangements with State and local people.

Q. Specifically, what are some ways in which the National Forests provide direct assistance to the economy of Rural America?

A. The National Forests are located in rural areas, and because the Forest Service is a decentralized organization, each forest and its ranger district subdivisions have their own headquarters, usually near or in small rural towns. Each headquarters hires local people for permanent jobs and for seasonal employment such as firefighting, planting trees, and recreational developments. Local contractors and laborers are used to build Forest Service facilities. The payrolls for all these employees boost local businesses.

The Forest Service builds roads and trails, again hiring local help, which make forest areas accessible and provide dependent rural communities with a firm and steadily growing renewable resource base for the forest products, recreation and service industries. New recreation developments and facilities attract more National Forest visitors who become customers for such local services as lodging, food, gas, photographic and hunting supplies, guide services, and local craft items. In many rural areas, the entire economic life of a community depends upon the recreation industry based on National Forest resources.

National Forest timber sales support established wood-using industries and encourage new ones by maintaining a steady flow of raw materials. Permits to graze on National Forest lands are important to livestock operations which in turn are important to the tax base and economic well-being of many small communities.

In addition to all this, 25 percent of National Forest receipts are returned to counties containing National Forests to be used for schools and roads.

Q. In what other ways does the work of the Forest Service contribute directly to the well-being of rural communities?

A. Forest Service research continually provides new knowledge which forms the basis for new rural industries and broadens markets for old ones. An excellent example is the Forest Service research on manufacturing plywood from southern pine which has made possible a major new industry in the South. Research also strives to improve the comfort and dignity of rural life through its low-cost housing efforts. It has developed plans and construction techniques to provide better housing to low-income rural families.

Q. How are Forest Service programs related to other USDA programs to improve rural America?

A. The Department of Agriculture is making a special effort to improve the income and gainful opportunities for rural people. In many rural areas there are significant acreages of forest land. In fact, one-third of rural America is forest land. The Forest Service has been assigned the overall leadership for the USDA in the conservation, development and utilization of these forest lands. It cooperates closely with State forestry agencies who provide assistance to land-owners, loggers, processors, and State and community leaders. The Forest Service leads USDA efforts to encourage and assist in the formation of forest cooperatives for multiple-use management, harvesting, marketing, and processing of forest products. Forest Service personnel are members of Technical Action Panels which have been set up in each State to coordinate programs sponsored by the USDA and provide assistance to local development groups. Most of the owners of small woodlands in America (nearly 80 percent of the privately owned forest land) are farmers and other rural residents who cooperate with the USDA in other programs. To move the Forest Service out of these programs would be to separate a farmer's woodlot from the rest of his farm.

Q. What reasons did former Secretary Freeman give for Agriculture being the proper Department for the Forest Service?

A. In his statement before the subcommittee on Executive Reorganization, Senate Committee on Government Operations, October 19, 1967, Secretary Freeman gave the following reasons against reorganization of the Forest Service and establishment of a Department of Natural Resources:

- (1) Any one Department containing all the Nation's resource agencies would be far too complex to be managed efficiently. Moreover, competition between the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture is healthy. In recreation, for example, it leads to more imaginative, innovative and effective service to the public.
- (2) Historic experience. The National Forests were placed under Agriculture in 1905 for good reasons and those reasons are just as good today. For the first time in 1905 forests were recognized as a renewable resource, and timber as a growing crop.
- (3) The Forest Service, like the Department of Agriculture, is a decentralized agency, closely linked to small towns, farms, and local communities. It has a tradition of working with local decision makers and is sensitive to local and private needs as well as regional ones.

Almost 60 percent of the Nation's forest land is owned in small parcels by individuals, usually farmers. Very soon these tracts in rural America must carry the burden of meeting our growing resource needs. Most of these farmers have traditionally cooperated with the USDA in other programs. To separate their woodlands from the rest of their farms when they deal with Federal programs, would be poor organization. Moreover, it would jeopardize the efficiency, continuity, and harmony of an effective package of resource programs built up over many years.

Q. Is the revitalization of rural America still a valid issue today?

A. Yes, it is. President Nixon, in the January-February issue of Rural America stated that: "Today's rural problems are the urban problems of tomorrow. The future vitality of our small towns and rural areas depends largely on sound planning. Our States and localities should make a greater effort to develop land use plans based on the community's available human and natural resources". . . . Secretary Hardin indicated in a statement published in the March Government Executive that one major goal of his administration will be to "make the whole of rural America more attractive--economically, culturally and socially."

Q. What benefits derive from forestry research operating under the Department of Agriculture?

A. The Department of Agriculture has long offered a scientific climate under which research prospers. In fact, it was originally established so that scientific studies might find knowledge that could be applied to increasing agricultural productivity. Trees depend upon the same fundamental processes of plant life as do human and domestic animal food plants. Both require much of the same kinds of research. Forest Service research programs are closely coordinated with other USDA research, as they must be.

Q. Are there advantages in having national forest administration, forestry research, and cooperation with State and private forest owners combined in the Forest Service?

A. Yes, definite advantages. It is because all these functions are combined in one agency that the Forest Service has been able to take the lead in national forestry programs. It makes long-range forestry planning possible. Forest research furnishes a scientific basis for every needed phase of the administration of the National Forests and a substantial contribution to the handling of every class of privately owned forests. All the functions of the Forest Service are entwined. They work toward a mutual purpose--to see that America's forest resources are managed and protected to provide a continuous yield of all forest products for the greatest good of the greatest number, both now and in the future.

Q. Are the functions of the Forest Service similar to or do they overlap the functions of agencies of the Department of the Interior?

A. Generally not. The present organization of resource-managing agencies does not result in any substantial duplication or conflict in policies or programs. With the exception of the Bureau of Land Management, the present Department of the Interior agencies operate on functional lines and for different purposes. Each administers and develops the land under its jurisdiction according to the basic purpose for which it was established. The National Park Service, for example, is concerned primarily with preservation of scenic and historic resources; Fish and Wildlife Service is concerned with the Nation's fish and game resources. Only the BLM is similar to the Forest Service in managing its land on a multiple-use basis.

Q. Did the Hoover Commission recommend the establishment of a Department of Natural Resources in 1949?

A. No, it did not. The Hoover Commission set up 24 Task Forces. One of the Task Forces, on Natural Resources, recommended the creation of a Department of Natural Resources. It proposed transfer of all

Forest Service activities, including research and State and private forestry, to the new Department. All forest and range lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management were recommended to be consolidated under the Forest Service. However, the Task Force on Agriculture did not recommend a Department of Natural Resources. Instead, it recommended the transfer of the land activities of the Bureau of Land Management to the Department of Agriculture. The Commission as a whole adopted the Report of the Task Force on Agriculture Activities and did not recommend establishment of a Department of Natural Resources.

Q. What were the recommendations of the Second Hoover Commission in 1955?

A. The second Hoover Commission reported that the work of the first Commission had been exhaustive and definitive and conditions had not changed in the intervening years. It recommended a committee to study all Federal rural lands and laws affecting them. It suggested that after a thorough study, a uniform policy for all agencies controlling Federal rural lands be developed.

Q. Did former Secretary of Agriculture Freeman recommend that the Bureau of Land Management be transferred to Agriculture?

A. No. What he did suggest was that if Congress decided it would be beneficial to group all natural resource functions in one complex, it would be better to transfer the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, water pollution control activities, and the outdoor recreation activities of the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture where they could be integrated into the economic development programs taking place in rural America. But he did not recommend this move. He said that "it would not be wise to reshuffle agencies in either direction. . . that nothing would be gained by regrouping resource agencies."

Q. How does the Public Land Law Review Commission fit into the picture?

A. The Commission was established in 1964 by Congress to study existing laws and procedures relating to the administration of the public lands and to suggest their modification. The Commission is holding hearings on public land laws throughout the country and the report of its findings is due by June 30, 1970. It's possible that the findings and recommendations of the Commission may bear on the organization of land-administering agencies.

- Q. Is the United States unique in placing its Federal forestry activities in a Department of Agriculture?
- A. No. With almost no exceptions, other nations with well developed agricultural and forestry organizations have included forestry in their agricultural establishments. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations includes a Branch of Forestry and Forest Products.
- Q. How good are the chances of a Department of Natural Resources, to include the Forest Service, being established this time?
- A. It's hard to say, but the climate is probably better for a Department of Natural Resources than in any time since the 1930's. The public is concerned about the environment--about water and air pollution, natural beauty, preserving wilderness, saving the wetlands. Public opinion is a potent force. If the public becomes convinced that only a Department of Natural Resources can coordinate policy well enough to save our natural resources, there will be strong support for such a department. Whether or not there will be a push to include the Forest Service depends on how well understood are the history of the Service, its purpose and objectives, and how it functions as a part of the Department of Agriculture.